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Public Hearing: HB5120, An Act Concerning Postsecondary Tuition Assistance and Special Need Subsidies  
for Adopted Children

2/8/2011

Good Morning Committee Chairs and Members of the Committee, my name is Ashley Marie Rodriguez Russo. I reside in the town of Hebron, CT. I am here today to testify on House/Senate Bill HB5691 once again. I have been adopted now for seven years. When I was six I was put in a shelter with my two brothers. From there I was in foster care with the same family for two years before they adopted us in 2004. I was born into an environment that was nowhere near an environment that I could strive in. Two years ago I was a sophomore when I testified, I am now a senior. I have grown and matured immensely. When I was a sophomore I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I now know exactly what I want to do. I want to be able to go to college and become a nurse and help the community. I have always enjoyed working with people and that is my dream. To this day I still maintain honors every quarter and work my hardest for the grades I have earned. I have gotten the opportunity to excel in a great environment and to expand on my learning and knowledge. I want to continue that. This is why this particular Bill is so important to me and family. It is not fair that other adoptive children are able to have this opportunity and we cannot take advantage of this bill because we missed a deadline by a few months. Not only is this about my education but I want to be the first in my family to graduate college and to become a successful young woman. I have promised myself not to end up like my biological mother. She was a failure that let drugs and other things control her life. She didn't even get passed high school. I have already achieved more than she has. I still am in school, and I've played varsity soccer since freshman year, and I play soccer on a premier level all over the East Coast but I want to go way beyond that and this Bill would provide me an opportunity to keep that promise to myself. Another reason this bill would help me is because I want to set an example for many younger Hispanic women in the community. I want to break the reputation that minorities have and prove those wrong who generalize. I will not be part of a statistic. I want to be that person young women, my brothers and immediate family look up to. I have been through so much in my life but I have not let that bring me down or stop me. I'm not planning on stopping here. I am planning on doing big things in my life, and this Bill can assist me to do just that. Please consider adopting the new language in Bill 5120 and afford all Connecticut adoptive children an opportunity to benefit educationally through this very important Public Act. Lastly, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Ashley Marie Rodriguez Russo

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